

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
Tijuana and Playas de Rosarito  
Potable Water and Wastewater Master Plan

**PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provided funds to the Comision Estatal de Servicios Publicos de Tijuana (CESPT) to analyze the short and long-term potable water and wastewater needs of the Tijuana-Playas de Rosarito area, in Baja California, Mexico. This study has culminated in the draft Master Plan for Potable Water and Wastewater for the Municipalities of Tijuana and Playas de Rosarito that outlines a 20-year program of infrastructure development and improvement.

The draft Master Plan defines an integrated strategy for water and wastewater services to meet the needs of present and future generations in regard to public health, quality of life and environmental protection. Recommended potable water supply facilities include the construction of a desalination plant for the conversion of seawater to potable water, microfiltration or reverse osmosis treatment systems to permit the reuse of treated wastewater, new wells and a water treatment plant. The proposed wastewater system improvements include the construction of five new wastewater treatment plants, the expansion of two existing plants, new pumping facilities and new pipelines.

**PURPOSE AND NEED**

The combined population of Tijuana and Playas de Rosarito, estimated at nearly 1.4 million in 2002, is expected to grow at an annual average rate of 2.9% and reach 2.4 million people in 2023. Despite the investments and improvements made in the 1980's and 1990's, in the areas of water and wastewater infrastructure, challenges persist. Approximately 6% of the population lack access to piped potable water; 14% of the population is not connected to the sewer system; and approximately 360 l/s (8.2 million gallons per day) of wastewater is discharged to the Pacific Ocean without treatment other than chlorination.

Wastewater management in the region is especially complex due to the topography of the area and to its proximity to the United States. The Tijuana River, which crosses the city, flows into the U.S. and discharges to the Pacific Ocean. Although the natural drainage of most of Tijuana is into the U.S., international agreements preclude any raw wastewater from crossing the U.S.-Mexico border, resulting in the need for atypical wastewater collection and conveyance infrastructure, including extensive pumping.

Projects derived from the Master Plan would expand the wastewater collection system, provide sufficient wastewater treatment, reduce environmental impacts, expand the water distribution system, and provide new or augmented sources of water supply.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND CONDITIONS**

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), EPA has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) that analyzes, at a programmatic level, the potential transboundary environmental impacts of the infrastructure improvements contemplated by the draft Master Plan. After considering a wide range of regulatory, environmental (both natural and human) and socio-economic factors, the EA did not identify any significant impacts to the environment that would result from the implementation of the proposed program of potable water and wastewater facilities discussed in the draft Master Plan.

Environmental impacts in Mexico are addressed in the Manifestacion de Impacto Ambiental para el Plan Maestro de Agua Potable y Sanaemiento para los Municipios de Tijuana y Playas de Rosarito, which was prepared in accordance with the environmental impact review process of the Direccion General de Ecologia del Estado de Baja California. This analysis supports a determination that the proposed infrastructure program will not have a significant adverse impact on human health and the environment in Mexico.

#### **PUBLIC REVIEW**

The EA is on file, along with other project materials, and is available for public inspection at the EPA Region 9 office in San Francisco, California and can be found on the EPA website at <http://www.epa.gov/region09/border>. Copies of the EA are also available for public review at the following locations:

Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve  
301 Caspian Way, Imperial Beach (619) 575 3614

Imperial Beach Library  
810 Imperial Beach Blvd, Imperial Beach (619) 424 6981

U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission  
2225 Dairy Mart Rd, San Ysidro (619) 662-7600

EPA San Diego Border Office  
610 West Ash, Suite 905, San Diego (619) 235-4765

Interested persons, including those who disagree with this proposal, may submit comments to EPA Region 9 within 30 calendar days from the day this document is issued. No administrative action will be taken on this draft Master Plan prior to the expiration of this comment period. Comments, via letter, fax or email, should be sent to Evelyn Wachtel at the address listed below.

Evelyn Wachtel (WTR-4)  
U.S. EPA Region 9  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
Telephone (415) 972-3410  
Fax (415) 947-3537  
Email [wachtel.evelyn@epa.gov](mailto:wachtel.evelyn@epa.gov)

After EPA assesses any comments received, those comments, EPA's responses, and this FONSI will be forwarded to the Regional Administrator for review and signature. If this FONSI is signed by the Regional Administrator, it will not be re-circulated for review but will be available to any individual upon request.

#### **FINDING**

After review of the EA and any comments received, EPA has determined that the proposed program of water and wastewater improvements identified in the draft Master Plan will not have a significant impact on the environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared for this project.

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Wayne Nastri  
Regional Administrator

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Date